



THE UNIVERSITY  
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# ThincBoards

## Get Your Business Board Ready

Information Pack



# A Practical Approach to Building Your Board

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## What is ThincBoards?

Welcome to ThincBoards, a 2-day intensive program that champions founders, advisors and directors on their journey of board readiness. This program aims to guide companies through proven processes and key learnings to prepare them for either their first steps into formation or evolutionary changes to their Company's governance.

Experiencing growth in your business? Or want to accelerate? When planning for future growth, businesses inevitably go through the process of assessing or reviewing their Board needs.

ThincBoards introduces you to the types of boards (directorship, advisory, not-for-profit), and the roles they can play, guiding you on risk management, effectiveness and the variety of considerations when forming or reviewing your board.

ThincBoards offers a highly practical, systematic approach to exploring board structure and management to build and maintain an effective board program, with outcome-focussed methodologies designed to foster longevity and resilience.

Led through interactive sessions, participants build or review their Company strategy, before designing appropriate Board member profiles and an accompanying charter informed by these strategic needs. Risk management models, effective administration practices, financial fitness and legal requirements are also covered with the aim to ensure a well-rounded understanding of governance.

Equipping you with this knowledge and strategies in a supportive peer-based environment is paramount to building and managing a robust, healthy and effective Board for the long term success of your Company.

Join ThincBoards to elevate and build on the confidence necessary to govern your business to continued success.

## Who is This For?

This program is for passionate, energetic entrepreneurs, established business owners, growth company founders, advisors and directors. Whether a visionary, pragmatist, a category creator or an industry stalwart our program welcomes those hungry for knowledge, growth, improvement and networking opportunities.

## Eligibility Criteria:

- Founder, advisor or director of an early revenue, or revenue generating company in the process of reviewing strategy, Board formation or composition
- Participants must be available to join in person and complete the pre-work requirements during the 2-day program
- Operating under an Australian Registered Company (Pty Ltd or private limited)

## What to Expect?

We provide invaluable, practical methodologies for founders, advisors and directors to design their board strategy, empowering them to elevate their Company governance, while offering an entree into a general governance requirements. Business growth opportunities could be unlocked via access to a suite of effective board management practices. Early and growth stage businesses often operate with higher risk growth targets, which requires a unique perspective and approach to their governance. With our holistic approach, you can gain the tools and knowledge to make informed decisions around your Board needs to drive the business outcomes you seek.



## Who is involved?

ThincBoards is newest in the ThincLab program line-up launching through collaboration with Steam Ventures. Steam Ventures exists to put the 'A' back into STEM because building businesses is an 'Art'. An investment and business growth advisory, Steam is led by tech entrepreneur Sasha Baranikov. ThincLab, The University of Adelaide's incubator, offers knowledge-rich support to students, alumni, staff, and startups.

### **Program Leads:**

Sessions will be delivered by Sasha Baranikov. An entrepreneur, advisor and director Sasha was the Co-Founder of telco unicorn, Uniti Wireless, later Uniti Group (ASX:UWL). Program management is coordinated by the ThincLab Team.

### **Program Contributors:**

Expect workshops, presentations or panels by industry experts throughout the program. All selected for their domain knowledge these experts have a broad range of national and global experience, and will have either founded, managed, supported, exited or invested in growth businesses. They will bring their passion and invaluable real world governance insights to growing startups and family businesses. Experts will be announced in the lead up to program launch.

## Key Outcomes of the Program

Our goal is to provide participants with the knowledge and resources to effectively design and manage the most appropriate board for their business.

Through a series of workshops and interactions with peers and mentors, insights are provided into effective advisor or director compositions and decision-making processes through optimised administration. Participants are assisted in navigating their way through stage appropriate business governance considerations, from formation to re-construction, with particular regard to board engagement and ongoing management. Building your network during industry networking is an added benefit.

This program offers more than just board formation and management knowledge. The business strategy and analysis undertaken can be used to enhance business operations, fundraising efforts, and internal decision-making.

Participation is the first step in understanding the power of good governance and its importance in achieving business success.



# Program Highlights

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## What Board Type is Best?

Navigating the Board landscape when forming your Board or exploring a refresh can be challenging. Is it time for a formal board? Does an advisory board make sense? Or could advisory complement my existing governance? Without a rule book, Founders often reach out to their business network for the answers. ThincBoards breaks down the options, approaches and key considerations when exploring which type of Board is best for your business.

## Strategy & Risk

In a fiercely competitive business environment, assessing your strategy against perceivable risks is an essential exercise. One that will set the scene for a robust decision-making environment for your board members. What risks are you willing to take and why? How will you approach mitigation? These considerations range widely depending on what type of business you're operating and the destinations you seek for it. Equipping your directors or advisors with an appropriate future focussed strategy and accompanying risk profile, will help to enable considered decision-making, expose threats and reveal opportunities when the times come.

## Planning for Success

Throughout history, planning for success has often set the companies that thrive apart from those who lose their way. Using proven frameworks and theory from the Entrepreneur Organisation's (EO) CEO Verne Harnish, you will identify and evaluate your Company's future challenges and goals to guide an advisory or formal board's direction over the near term. Planning is an essential ingredient to success and provides board members with the clarity to support them in governing the long term interests of your Company.

## Board Administration for Effectiveness

You've got the plan, you've weighed up the risks and there's financial modeling to underpin potential scenarios and assumptions. Building an efficient board administration system, appropriate to your company's stage, is designed to maximise member effectiveness and the Boards overall impact. Getting the most out of your board members, in the time you have with them is all about preparation, structure and continuous improvement.





## Financial Fitness

A financially healthy company continues to be wealthy. The fundamentals of your Company's financial fitness are critical to map out and monitor over time. Having understood the risk appetite of the business, reflection on key financial metrics will complement your strategy. These temperature checks are necessary for a board to manage the longevity and health of the business, as well as identify opportunities or areas of improvement.

## Board Charter Design

In the immortal words of architect Louis Sullivan, "*form follows function*", and ThincBoards is all about the most practical application of theory and frameworks to set you on a path to success. During the program you will be led through the process of appropriate board type selection, board charter design and how to create an impactful membership requirements matrix. This design process will draw on key aspects of your strategic plan, using a systematic process to unlock the power of a well constructed board team and charter. The purpose and goals of a company should be the starting point for your board

## Member Match-Making

The most powerful element of a well functioning board is the people you attract to join and support the journey. With your board charter design in hand, you will be well equipped to imagine the most suited candidates for your Company and how to consider succession strategy. We work hands-on with participants to identify and short-list candidates that could be approached in an initial reachout. Whether it be as part of a refresh or to bring your inaugural members together.

## Our Program Lead

### Sasha Baranikov

Over the past 17 years Sasha has been an active investor, Director and C-level in multiple entertainment and technology companies. Sasha thrives on the challenge of building new businesses, a self-made entrepreneur and growth strategist, her 17 years global experience spans entertainment, gaming, telecommunications, new space and technology industries.

As Co-Founder of Internet provider Uniti Wireless Limited (ASX:UWL), she took the company to an ASX listing within < 5 years and in < 10 the Company sold for ~ \$3.6 billion. Sasha's innate curiosity and passion for building continues as a Startmate First Believer and The University of Adelaide's ThincLab Accelerator growth advisor. As an investor and advisor to a number of exciting startups, Sasha has an intimate understanding of the high, lows and challenges that a Founder can experience. She brings authenticity, care and a *Founder Mindset* to the table. *"It's such a thrill to fuel other ambitious Founder fires and have the privilege to be part of so many clever journeys."*

In her spare time, Sasha enjoys channeling her energy and creativity into her artwork, family and an Adelaide Hills small batch distillery that she has co-founded.



## Further enquiries

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### Kaurna acknowledgement

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Kaurna people, the original custodians of the Adelaide Plains and the land on which the University of Adelaide's campuses at North Terrace, Waite, and Roseworthy are built. We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and relationship of the Kaurna people to country and we respect and value their past, present and ongoing connection to the land and cultural beliefs. The University continues to develop respectful and reciprocal relationships with all Indigenous peoples in Australia, and with other Indigenous peoples throughout the world.